AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4 - 7, 9, 11, 12, 14 – 17, and 19, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A machine-implemented method for managing access to data, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting that a database ~~command~~statement is issued;

wherein said database ~~command~~statement requires access to at least one column in a table;

invoking a policy function which database metadata associates with at least one column in a table;

receiving an expression returned by invoking said policy function;

rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement that incorporates said expression;

wherein the modified database ~~command~~statement specifies, based on the expression, whether to mask a value of the at least one column by returning a mask of the value instead of the value; and

executing said modified database ~~command~~statement.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1,

wherein said database ~~command~~statement requests at least two values located in at least two columns;

wherein each of the two values are located in a different one of the at least two columns; and

wherein the step of executing the modified database ~~command~~statement includes at least

returning at least one of the at least two values, and

returning a masked value instead of at least a second of the at least two values.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the expression is a condition expression.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the masked value is returned for rows that are retrieved for the database ~~command~~statement issued, that do not satisfy the condition, and to which access privileges are granted.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
wherein said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and
wherein the step of rewriting is performed if a match is found between the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access and the list of one or more columns.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:
said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and
the step of rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement is not performed if a match is not found between the list of one or more columns and the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

creating the policy function that returns a condition expression;

wherein the step of creating the modified database ~~command~~statement includes incorporating the condition expression and the database ~~command~~statement into the modified database ~~command~~statement.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

creating a policy referencing the policy function and specifying trigger columns that trigger implementing the policy.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising registering the policy function with a database server, wherein the policy function returns a condition expression and the modified database ~~command~~statement is based on the condition expression.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions, which when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform a method comprising the steps of:

detecting that a database ~~command~~statement is issued;

wherein said database ~~command~~statement requires access to at least one column in a table;

invoking a policy function which database metadata associates with at least one column in a table;

receiving an expression returned by invoking said policy function;

rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement that incorporates said expression;

wherein the modified database ~~command~~statement specifies, based on the expression, whether to mask a value of the at least one column by returning a mask of the value instead of the value; and

executing said modified database ~~command~~statement.

12. (Currently Amended) The machine readable medium of claim 1,

wherein said database ~~command~~statement requests at least two values located in at least two columns;

wherein each of the two values are located in a different one of the at least two columns; and

wherein the step of executing the modified database ~~command~~statement includes at least

returning at least one of the at least two values, and

returning a masked value instead of at least a second of the at least two values.

13. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 1,

wherein the expression is a condition expression.

14. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the masked value is returned for rows

that are retrieved for the database ~~command~~statement issued,

that do not satisfy the condition, and

to which access privileges are granted.

15. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1,

Wherein said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and

wherein the step of rewriting is performed if a match is found between the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access and the list of one or more columns.

16. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein:

said database metadata associates a list of one or more columns with a policy used for controlling access to the one or more columns; and

the step of rewriting said database ~~command~~statement by creating a modified database ~~command~~statement is not performed if a match is not found between the list of one or more columns and the at least one column to which the database ~~command~~statement requires access.

17. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the steps further comprise

creating the policy function that returns a condition expression;

wherein the step of creating the modified database ~~command~~statement includes incorporating the condition expression and the database ~~command~~statement into the modified database ~~command~~statement.

18. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the steps further comprise creating a policy referencing the policy function and specifying trigger columns that trigger implementing the policy.

19. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the steps further comprise registering the policy function with a database server, wherein the policy function returns a condition expression and the modified database ~~command~~statement is based on the condition expression.

20. (Cancelled)